

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1600
INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 7815

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM
SUBJECT: EXPULSION OF CHANG CHI-FU FROM THAILAND

1. ON MARCH 14, EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON LT GEN THUANATHONG SUVANDAT, SENIOR AIDE TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND DISCUSSED, AMONG OTHER SUBJECTS, THE PROBLEM OF CHANG CHI-FU AND THE SHAN UNITED ARMY. EMBASSY OFFICER EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE RTG WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL IN ITS EFFORTS TO FORCE THE SUA LEADER AND HIS FOLLOWERS OUT OF THAILAND.

2. THUANATHONG SAID THE PM HAD AGREED TO A SPECIAL MEETING NEXT WEEU THAT WOULD INCLUDE THE THREE SERVICE CHIEFS, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE THAI NATIONAL POLICE DEPT., THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE, THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF SUPREME COMMAND, THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIMSELF TO DISCUSS ACTIONS WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN TO FULFILL THE PM'S PLEDGE TO RID THAILAND OF THE SUA LEADER. THUANATHONG WANTS A SPECIAL TASK FORCE SET UP AND BELIEVES THAT THE ROYAL THAI ARMY SHOULD BE TASKED WITH MOVING CHANG CHI-FU OUT, RATHER THAT THE POLICE, IN WHOM THUANATHONG HAS LITTLE CONFIDENCE. HE ENVISIONS A MILITARY OPERATION LED BY RTA ELEMENTS AGAINST CHANG CHI-FU. ACCORDING TO THUANATHONG, CHANG CHI-FU'S ARMED FORCES ARE ON THE BURMA SIDE OF THE
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BORDER AND ONLY ABOUT 300 TO 400 FAMILIES ARE ON THE THAI SIDE. IN DISCUSSING THE SITUATION, THUANATHONG ACKNOWLEDGED THAT, ALTHOUGH CHANG CHI-FU CAN NEITHER READ NOR WRITE, HE IS A CLEVER ADVERSARY. HE ALSO DESCRIBED THE SUA CHIEF OF STAFF, WHOM HE IDENTIFIED AS CHANG SI CHUAN, AS VERY ABLE.

3. MARCH 15 BANGKOK POST REPORTED THE RTG'S INTENTION TO EJECT CHANG CHI-FU AND THE SUA. THE POST EXPLAINED THAT GENERAL CHAROEN PONGPANIT, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE SUPREME COMMAND, PLANS TO ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE CHANG CHI-FU TO LEAVE PEACEFULLY FIRST, AND WILL RESORT TO FORCE IF THIS ATTEMPT FAILS. THE POST SPECULATES THE REMOVAL OF CHANG CHI-FU MIGHT REQUIRE THE COOPERATION OF THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT, AND A JOINT OPERATION IS A POSSIBILITY. THE POST ALSO REPORTED THAT CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES IN CHIANG RAI, TAK, AND NAN PROVINCES WILL BE ASKED TO STOP THEIR PRACTICE OF HIRING SUA TROOPS TO PROTECT ROAD-BUILDING CREWS WORKING IN SENSITIVE AREAS. WHITEHOUSE

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